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# STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Internal Communique • Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled

## New MAP-A Science (DLM)

Science field testing for students grades 3-12 are November 4 through December 2, 2015. Science year end assessment for students grades 3-12 are April 4 through May 27, 2016.

Students will be tested in three grade bands:

- Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>)
- Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>)
- High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)

The three science domains are:

- Life Science
- Earth and Space Science
- Physical Science

The three linkage levels for each Essential Element are:

- Initial
- Precursor
- Target

Teachers will complete Science First Contact survey questions for each student to develop a method for determining which linkage level of the first testlet to deliver.

Similar to ELA and math field testing, the testlets will assess a different Essential Element and will be at different linkage levels. One of the testlets within the form will be at a linkage level that is too easy or too hard for the student. This design is intentional and will help determine appropriate initialization and routing algorithms.

Science Field Tests are **not** assigned through the Instructional Tools Interface (ITI). The student's username and password are on test tickets in the Test Management tab in Educator Portal.

The Testlet Information Page (TIP) for each test form is also provided as a PDF in the Test Management tab. There will be one TIP for the entire set of testlets.

Test administrators should follow the procedures specific to science testlets as described in the SCIENCE SUPPLEMENT TO THE TEST ADMINISTRATOR MANUAL.

## Red Nose Day USA at Boonslick School

On May 21, 2015 staff at Boonslick School participated in the inaugural Red Nose Day USA event. The program is dedicated to raising money in a fun way for children who are living in poverty. Student Martel Green, aka The Boonslick Charmer, acquired a red nose and sported it as he cruised about the building with school personnel. He was highly amused when they stopped by the building administrator's office for a visit and discovered that she, too, was wearing a red nose.



## Mentorship: A Two-Way Street

*By Bonnie Aaron, Assistant Superintendent*

The name Mentor is found in Greek mythology. Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, left his home to fight in the Trojan War. Although the war caused Odysseus to face grave uncertainty and hardship, his main concern was to provide someone to teach and look after his son Telemachus. Odysseus must have taken into consideration the criteria for appointing someone with this responsibility while in his absence. Prior to leaving for the Trojan War, Odysseus appointed his friend Mentor to be a guide, teacher, friend and advisor to his son Telemachus. Because of Mentor's relationship with Telemachus, the term or use of the word Mentor has been adopted into English meaning an experienced and trusted advisor who imparts wisdom to a less experienced colleague.

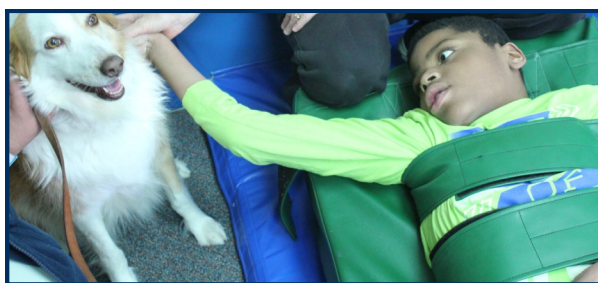
Mentoring is a planned, intentional relationship that provides the mentee with the guidance necessary for his or her personal and professional development. Mentorship allows individuals to be open to new possibilities, recognize obstacles, view from a different lens and realize the benefits of collaborating with a mentor. Although the benefits of the mentee are apparent, the mentor gains leadership skills throughout the process. When not neglected or ill-defined, mentoring implemented correctly results in a win-win situation.

An effective mentoring program is part of the district's induction process and the keystone of the recruitment, induction and retention of high-quality educators. Effective mentoring is vital to the retention of educators. Since mentoring is a two-way street, let's all help pave the way for an effective mentorship program.

## Therapy Dog Visits Helen Davis School

*By Jennifer Burns, Home School Coordinator*

During the last quarter of the 2014-15 school year, Helen Davis School received a special visit from therapy dog, Bailey, and her handler, Dr. Melinda Kovacs, from the nationally recognized program, Pet Partners, Inc. The timing for this visit was perfect as staff and students began to wrap up a busy school year. Research studies have proven that pets can actually help reduce stress and anxiety in their interactions with people, so this opportunity allowed for everyone to decompress after a busy year. During Bailey's visit at Helen Davis School, it was easy to see the direct benefits to the students. Without even knowing, students were tackling IEP goals and benchmarks by "lifting their heads to make eye contact" with Bailey, "reaching out" to pet her, "crawling" towards her, or "communicating a greeting" or smile. One of the teachers reported a student saying the word "dog" as soon as Bailey entered the classroom, a word not yet heard from this student at school. This visit was also a great opportunity to teach students lessons on how to interact with animals using "nice hands." There were a few students who were unsure of Bailey at first meeting, but they quickly began to ease up after spending a little bit of time with her kind, calm nature. Bailey was welcoming to all students and allowed each to spend time with her in their own way. Bailey's handler, Melinda, is a political science professor at the local university and has volunteered with Pet Partners, Inc. for many years, making visits to local schools and nursing facilities in the community. Melinda hopes to return to Helen Davis School with Bailey for more pet therapy.



*Students at Helen Davis School interact with therapy dog, Bailey.*

# What to Do First When Developing Student and Classroom Schedules

By Donna Catt, Director for Program Services

The best advice in preparing for a new school year is to begin as early as possible. There are many things a teacher can do that will facilitate his or her experience and make the school year more productive for both the teacher and the students. One of the most valuable preparations is to create individual student schedules and a classroom schedule. To overlook these tools would be a major mistake and will inevitably make classroom management more difficult, if not impossible.

The very first step in setting up the room actually involves getting to know the students that will be in the classroom before the first day of school. It is imperative to find out as much information about each student as possible, to be fully prepared when he or she enters the room for the first time. A wealth of materials is available on each student. The only exception to this may be a new student to the school from another city or state where materials may not have yet arrived, but there are still materials available on new students.

When working with students with disabilities, information on a student can be found in the student's most recent Individual Education Program (IEP). The IEP will contain the following statements:

## Present levels of achievement and educational performance

Present levels describe how the student is currently doing in school. This includes how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

## Annual goals

The annual goals stated in the IEP indicate what the teacher and the school team think the student can reasonably accomplish in a year. The goals must relate to meeting the needs that result from the student's disability. The annual goals must also help the student be involved in and progress in the general curriculum. This will be vital information to know when planning the student's daily schedule and the classroom schedule. The teacher is responsible for the instruction required by these goals.

## Special education and related services to be provided

The IEP must list the special education and related services to be provided to the student. This includes supplementary aids and services, such as a communication device. It also includes changes to the program or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student.

## Participation with nondisabled students

The IEP must include an explanation that answers the question of how much of the school day will the student be educated separately from students without disabilities or not participate in extracurricular or other nonacademic activities, such as lunch or clubs.

## Participation in state and district-wide assessments

The state of Missouri and MSSD administers tests to assess student achievement in certain grades or age groups. In order to participate in these tests, the student will need individual modifications or changes in how the tests are administered. The IEP team must decide what modifications the student needs and list the modifications in the IEP. If the student will not be taking the assessment tests, the IEP must include a statement as to why the tests are not appropriate for the student and how the student will be tested instead.

## Dates and location

The IEP must state when services and modifications will begin, how often the services and modifications will be provided, where the services and modifications will be provided, and how long the services and modifications will last.

## Transition goals and services

No later than when a student turns 16 years old, the IEP must include measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and, when appropriate, independent living skills. Also included are the transition services needed to help the student reach those goals, including what the student should study.

## Measuring progress

The IEP must state how school personnel will measure the student's progress toward the annual goals. It must also state how parents will be informed regularly of their child's progress and whether that progress is enough to enable the student to achieve his or her goals by the end of the year. There should be information in the IEP that provides measurements of progress and levels of the student's current achievement.

*(continued on page 4)*

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### Health alerts

This piece of medical information may be found on the front page of the student's IEP. If something is noted, then it becomes the teacher's professional responsibility to learn as much as possible on that health condition. Understanding and knowledge of the student's health issues are necessary when speaking with parents about these issues. While the teacher is not a medical professional, finding out as much as possible about the student's health issues is recommended in order to sound professional and prepared when meeting with the parents. It will be very reassuring to parents when they see that the teacher has an understanding of any conditions that their student may be facing.

### Classification

Find out as much as possible about the student's specific disability classification. A teacher may already be knowledgeable about the disability, but it never hurts to learn more. Numerous sources on all of the different disability classifications can be found on the National Association of Special Education Teachers' (NASSET) Web site at <http://www.naset.org/>.

### Modifications

Modifications are adjustments to the student's classroom or test requirements to level the playing field with his or her peers who are not disabled. Examples of modifications may be extended time when taking tests, taking tests in a smaller, less noisy environment, having questions read aloud, or answering questions in the test booklet rather than on an answer sheet. Look for the classroom and test modifications listed in the IEP that the student is entitled to have, then thoroughly investigate each modification. Fully understand what is involved and the possible reasons as to the rationale for why the modifications were deemed appropriate. A full understand these modifications is necessary since the teacher will very likely be communicating and explaining them to the student's other teachers.

### Accommodations

There may be times when a student is entitled to some classroom accommodation. Examples of these include special furniture, filters for lighting, acoustic enhancements, etc. The list of accommodations for each student should be clearly described in the IEP. Investigate and become knowledgeable of each accommodation.

### Related services

The IEP will contain a section on the related services that the student is entitled to have while in school. The term related services means transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including speech-language pathology and audiology services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in a student (20 U.S.C. Section 1401(22)).

### Assistive technology

The IEP may outline assistive technology the student is entitled to be provided. Assistive technology devices are mechanical aids which substitute for or enhance the function of some physical or mental ability that is impaired. Assistive technology can be anything homemade, purchased off the shelf, modified or commercially available which is used to help a student perform some task of daily living.

Take into account all of the individual needs of a student when planning the school day. Do not forget the Service Summary in the IEP which helps breakdown each service into minutes, which can then be converted to schedules for the student and the classroom. Have a wonderful and timely school year.

## ***October is Disability History and Awareness Month in Missouri***

MSSD encourages it's school to participate in Disability History and Awareness Month. Check out the State of Missouri Disability Portal (<http://disability.mo.gov/>) for information about HB 555 which created Disability History and Awareness Month in Missouri, a poster which can be displayed in classrooms and offices to educate others, a resource guide to help plan an event, and information about National Disability Employment Awareness Month (also celebrated in October). The Governor's Council on Disability's Web site (<http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/>) features a slideshow of Missourians with Disabilities in Everyday Life.

# Communicable Illnesses in the School Setting

By Leslie Woods, Assistant Director for School Health Services

When a student comes to school ill, everyone is at risk of contracting the illness. It is important that all parents and staff follow the Missouri Schools for Severely Disabled (MSSD) policy for illness. This policy is based on guidelines set forth by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. By working together to keep communicable illness out of our school, parents and staff can help build a safer learning environment for MSSD students.

## WHAT REQUIRES EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL?

### Fever

- 100.4° or higher.
- May return to school 24 hours after last episode of fever or with a note from a physician releasing the student back to school.

### Diarrhea

- Two or more loose stools while at school or in the previous 24 hours that are not normal for the student.
- May return 24 hours after last episode of diarrhea or with a note from a physician releasing the student back to school.

### Vomiting

- Two or more times while at school or in the previous 24 hours that is not normal for the student.
- May return 24 hours after last episode of vomiting or with a note from a physician releasing the student back to school.

### Mouth Sores

- Only if there is a risk of transmitting (through aggression, drooling, spitting, etc.) infection to others.
- May return 24 hours after sores have healed or the risk of transmission has decreased, or with a note from a physician releasing the student back to school.

### Rash

- Only if the rash is diagnosed as communicable and is not able to remain covered during school and while on the school bus.
- Exclusion for other symptoms may apply.

### Eye Drainage, Redness or Pain

- May return 24 hours after treatment is initiated or last episode of drainage, redness and/or pain, or with a note from a physician releasing the student back to school.

### Wounds or Sores

- Only if the wound or sore is not able to be kept covered during school and while on the school bus.
- May return to school when able to keep the wound or sore covered at all times while at school and on the bus. A note from a physician is requested that includes any wound or sore care and infection information.

Other illness not listed may require exclusion from school.

If a student becomes ill at school, the school nurse will check the student as soon as possible. If the student needs to be picked up from school, the building administrator, nurse, teacher or other designee will contact the parent to have the student picked up.

If a student becomes ill at home, the parent should notify the school that the student is ill and will be kept home.

If a student is hospitalized for any reason, a note from a physician is required to release the student back to school.

The school nurse will be able to answer any questions that you or parents may have.